

COUNTRY: Czechoslovakia

CIA [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Czechoslovakian Custom Duties, Postal Regulations, and Living Conditions

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE ACQUIRED: . . . . .25X1X6

DATE ACQUIRED: [REDACTED]

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DATE OF INFORMATION: Jan 52 - 7 May 53

SOURCE: [REDACTED]

1. I received acknowledgement of packages sent to relatives in Prague, Czechoslovakia which contained the following statements: "We had to pay a duty of 885 crowns on clothing, shoes, and handkerchiefs. The Czechoslovak customs considered the shoes new and valued them at 3600 crowns. This duty amounted to one-third of my monthly salary but was still worth it as those are terribly high. You have such gay colors whereas we have only drab, gloomy ones. I had to pick up the package at the post office in the morning because my working hours are from 1:30 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. I am employed by Dr. Chvala, who used to be your doctor".
2. "Whenever it will again be possible free trade (between Czechoslovakia and US) I would like to be considered seriously in obtaining an agency to sell ice boxes (refrigerators). As you know quite a few people here would like to buy them".
3. "Insofar as newspaper clippings and magazines are concerned, I would recommend that you do not send any more. I would like, however, to have a Pitman's shorthand book and another one called "700 Words". I have read with great interest the news regarding recent elections in the US which were in the copy of the Reader's Digest you sent. I would be very happy if I could exchange ideas with you about these things.
4. "With everything so expensive and scarce nowadays, a suit for my son (sixteen years old and 1.80 meters tall) cost 10 to 12,000 crowns and my monthly pay is only 5,000 crowns".

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5. "Your father is still with E.I. nowadays called Prazske Energeticke Rozvodne Zavody (Prague Power Distribution Enterprises). He has been ill with arthritis and requires drugs and injections which are in shortage here".
6. "Your father received a notice from the post office that there was a package for him with a duty and postage cost of 1607 crowns. He was told it contained  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. chocolates and one pair of ladies shoes. Since the amount was so high, we obtained a form for reduction of duty and it was quite a job filling it out. We had to state all sources of income, amount of property and information about dependents. After a period of one month the duty was reduced to 500 crowns".
7. "As time goes on, we improve and improve (satire) but I am disgusted with everything and would do anything to live the way you do".
8. "Today (7 May 1953) a special announcement regarding packages from abroad was posted in the Customs-house. Packages may be received every three months and should contain the following; one new suit or new garment, one pair of nylons, one kilo each of any kind of food but only  $\frac{1}{4}$  kilo of tea and any amount of second hand or worn clothing. If these rules are followed, the package will not be subject to duty. Final special condition is the recipient must be certified by the Customs-house as a good citizen and must prove that he has behaved himself.

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